

**MALAY WOMEN IN TERTIARY EDUCATION : TRENDS OF CHANGE
IN FEMALE ROLE IDEOLOGY**

by

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ke atas 150 pelajar wanita Melayu yang menuntut di tahun akhir di universiti ini adalah satu analisa mengenai aliran-aliran perubahan dalam ideologi peranan wanita dan perkaitannya dengan faktor-faktor sosialisasi yang utama. Terutamanya, ini termasuklah pendedahan kepada jenis ideologi Islam yang disebarkan melalui pergerakan dakwah dan ideologi yang terlindung dalam dasar-dasar pembangunan nasional melalui perlaksanaan Dasar Ekonomi Baru, dan perluasan pendidikan tinggi bagi wanita dari semua kumpulan etnik dan kelas. Berhubung dengan faktor pendidikan tinggi ini, kemasukan dan juga sifat pendidikan universiti telah digunakan untuk menggambarkan ideologi tersebut.

Dengan menggunakan analisa struktur kuantitatif dan kajian-kajian kes terperinci, kajian ini telah menganalisa konflik-konflik dan kesan-kesan yang timbul dari pendedahan penuntut-penuntut wanita Melayu ini terhadap kedua-dua faktor tersebut di atas dan selanjutnya dikaitkan dengan amalan-amalan sosialisasi awal, khususnya latarbelakang sosio-ekonomi dan pendidikan mereka.

Analisa ini menunjukkan bahawa proses pengambilan, peninggalan atau penyesuaian nilai-nilai dan konsep-konsep mengenai ideologi peranan wanita adalah dipengaruhi oleh sosialisasi melalui pendidikan universiti. Pada amnya proses ini telah mengakibatkan pengambilan ideologi kesamatarafan peranan

dan mengukuhkan aspirasi-aspirasi keiktisan. Walau bagaimanapun, pengalaman-pengalaman sosialisasi melalui dakwah didapati telah menetapkan semula ideologi pembezaan peranan mengikut jantina dengan menekankan peranan wanita di rumah dan peminggiran dalam bidang iktisad.

Analisa kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa ideologi Islam yang disebarkan oleh gerakan-gerakan dakwah telah membawa kepada penekanan semula terhadap peranan wanita di rumah, iaitu dengan lelaki memainkan peranan utama sebagai ketua isi rumah dan dalam masyarakat umumnya. Keluasan penerimaan atau penolakan terhadap ideologi dakwah didapati sangat penting dalam menentukan keluasan penerimaan dan penolakan mereka terhadap ideologi pembezaan peranan mengikut jantina, khususnya apabila wanita diberikan kedudukan yang rendah di rumah dan dalam masyarakat. Penerimaan atau penolakan ini mempunyai kaitan rapat dengan faktor-faktor sosialisasi yang lain termasuk tempat asal, taraf pendidikan ibubapa (khususnya ibu), pendedahan awal terhadap ajaran-ajaran dan amalan-amalan Islam dan pengalaman-pengalaman awal sosialisasi keluarga. Saling perkaitan dan kompleksiti pengaruh-pengaruh ini telah dikenali melalui kedua-dua penilaian subjektif responden dan penilaian terhadap aliran-aliran perubahan yang lebih luas dan pengaruh-pengaruh dalam pembentukan ideologi peranan wanita.

ABSTRACT

This study of 150 Malay female final year undergraduates is an analysis of the trends of change in female role ideology in response to pertinent socialization factors. Importantly, these include exposure to the type of Islamic ideology which is promulgated through the *dakwah* movement, and the ideology implicit in national development policies through the implementation of the New Economic Policy and expansion of tertiary education for women from all ethnic groups and classes. With respect to the latter, access to as well as the nature of university education is taken to reflect such ideology.

Using a quantitative structural analysis and indepth case-studies, the study analyses the conflicts and consequences of female Malay undergraduates' exposure to these two factors, and relates them to earlier socialization practices, in particular their socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

The analysis shows that the process of acquiring, discarding or modifying values and concepts on female role ideology was affected by socialization through university education. It generally resulted in the adoption of egalitarian role-ideology and fostered professional aspirations. However, the socialization experiences through *dakwah* reconfirmed gender-differentiated role ideology emphasizing the domestication and professional marginalization of women.

The analysis also shows that the Islamic ideology advocated by the *dakwah* movement led to a reemphasis on the domestic role of women, i.e. with men playing the primary role as head of the household and in the public domain. The extent to which the Malay females under study either accept or reject the *dakwah* ideology is seen to be critical in determining the extent to which they accept or reject a gender-differentiated role ideology, when the female is relegated to a subserviant position both in the private and public domain. This acceptance or rejection is closely tied to other socialization factors, including place of origin, parental (maternal) educational levels, early exposure to Islamic teachings and practices, and early family socialization experiences. The interrelationships and complexity of influences are identified through both the respondents' subjective evaluations, and an assessment of the wider trends of change and influences in the formation of female role ideology.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Tertiary Education and Changing Position of Women: A Comparative Perspective

The expansion of educational opportunities at the tertiary level is part of the larger process of economic development. The state provides people with increased educational facilities and greater access to the institutions of higher education where they are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, motivation and values which are essential for the economic development of the country. It is not wrong to argue that women in tertiary education, as a group, are very much affected by socio-economic and cultural changes resulting from overall development processes. Women in tertiary education have been required to acquire new skills, knowledge and motivational factors to participate and play a role in the modern sector of the economy.

Prior to discussing the impact of tertiary education on the overall position of women, it is essential to understand how women of any group or country have been affected by economic development and socio-cultural changes. In approaching this question different and sometimes contradictory views have been presented in literature.

Arguments that economic development and modernisation diminish the gender inequalities in role and status are found in

1
literature [Mill & Taylor, 1970; Patai, 1967; Goode, 1963].
This approach has been expressed in a classical statement by an
early (1920's) scholar [Mill & Taylor, 1970]:

"Every step in the progress of civilisation has been
marked by a nearer approach to equality in the condition
of the sexes" [Mill & Taylor, 1970:73].

? → More contemporary scholars [Patai, 1967; Goode, 1963] ?
② educational and job opportunities at all levels and sectors have
gradually introduced a new range of options and eliminated the
obstacles faced by women in the pre-industrial, agricultural era
in the West.

Historically, the economic transformation of the West
altered the distinctions of roles and status between men and
women. The pre-industrial patriarchal division of labour within
which women had a secondary and passive (economic and political)
role vis-a-vis men was altered by the economic development which
allocated roles on the basis of individual abilities rather than
2
gender. As a result of this process, men and women have been
given relatively equal opportunities to play various roles in the

-
1. The assumption that the position of women has progressed with
industrialisation, and modernisation, with the highest
women's status being found in industrialised western
countries, has been criticised by others [Allen, 1976;
Jaquette, 1967; Leacock, 1978; Sacks, 1974; Tinker, 1974].
 2. The consequences of industrialisation on the changes in pre-
industrial division of labour which resulted in allocation
of roles on the basis of egalitarian criteria were discussed
in the literature [Thelma, 1981].

1

social, economic and political spheres.

Similarly, expansion of educational opportunities at the tertiary level led to greater participation of western college educated women in economic activities outside the home. This process provided the basis for achieving gender equality with regard to participation in decision making processes, both at the familial and societal levels.

Research [Weiss, etc. 1976; Treiman & Terrel, 1976] in the United States on tertiary education and women shows that a relatively large number of women receiving tertiary education leads to a relatively large number of women in the labour force and in particular, at higher ranking positions. Women's access to tertiary education does not only accelerate their participation in the modern labour force but also in politics. Research [Lansing, 1973; 1976] on changing political attitudes of American women shows that there is a correlation between increased political participation (i.e. voting and running for office) by women and their higher educational levels (especially at the tertiary level). Lansing suggests that the increased political participation of women is an indicator of changes in the definition of sex roles as a consequence of a higher level of formal education obtained. Thus, tertiary education provides new roles both in the labour force and politics.

1. Iglitzin argues that in the West, the variety and complexity of industrialised society brought greater opportunities for women to develop their potential in various fields outside the home. Women have also found enhanced personal and social freedom [Iglitzin, 1976].